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SEPARATING COMPOSITION FROM LITERATURE IN THE HIGH SCHOOL¹

EDWIN L. MILLER

Principal, Northwestern High School, Detroit, Michigan

The French soldier in Sienkiewicz' novel is so polite that, before running an adversary through, he bows and says, "Pardonnez-moi." Similarly, in view of the fact that I shall probably say some things this morning which will irritate you, I desire in advance to beg your pardon. Please remember, also, that I am myself an English teacher and as such have been guilty of all of the pedagogical crimes and misdemeanors of which I am going to accuse those English teachers who are so unfortunate as to be absent from this meeting.

At the present time the teachers of English in the high schools of America are divided into two camps. Those in one believe that the study of literature should be separated from that of composition. Those in the other hold that there is a connection so intimate and so vital between the two that the one cannot be dissociated from the other. Both, in my judgment, are partly right. To show why and in what sense both are right is the first object of this paper. Its second object is to show how these apparently divergent views can be so reconciled in practice as to secure the advantages of both theories without sacrificing the benefits of either.

Thomas Carlyle, in his *Essay on Burns*, says that Burns failed because he lacked unity of purpose. He was not wholly a poet or wholly a farmer. The result was that he succeeded fully as neither. His life was like an ax with a double edge. As Carlyle says, "The wedge will rend rocks; but its edge must be sharp and single; if it be double, the wedge is bruised in pieces and will rend nothing."

In our teaching of English we are trying to rend rocks with a double wedge. We are handicapped, as was Burns, by a double

¹ A paper read before the National Council of Teachers of English at St. Paul, Minnesota, July 9, 1914.

aim. Our purpose lacks unity. We are trying at one and the same time to teach two things which, while superficially related, need to be attacked by radically different methods. We are trying to teach our pupils at one and the same time to take in ideas and to give them out. In other words, English, as we use the word, means both literature and composition. To complicate the problem, grammar, vocational guidance, the history of literature, elocution, and everything else for which no other place in the course can be found, together with all of the teachers who can teach nothing else, are frequently dumped into the English department. The result is about as satisfactory as that which we should obtain in the physical-training department if we were to lump baseball, basket-ball, football, tennis, and poker together under the general title of "athletics" and require one and the same team to play all five games from Labor Day until the Fourth of July.

One interesting result of all this is that literature has been much, and composition little, taught, for the very delightful reason that some teachers, being human, find it more agreeable to listen four hours a day to the sound of their own voices expounding Shakespeare than to bend fourteen hours a day, not to mention Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, over the task of laboriously proofreading the crude themes of backward children. Even when the teacher has one of those New England consciences which cause the owner to regard it as a duty, not only to suffer herself, but to be the cause of suffering in her pupils, it often happens that a boy's apparent success in literature covers up his real inability to write to such an extent that, after being passed from course to course, he is finally graduated with a colossal incapacity for self-expression. Too often the result of the whole business, indeed, is that he can neither read nor write. He does not care for good books. He spells "believe" "b-e-l-e-i-v-e" and "receive" the other way. He cannot distinguish "t-o" from "t-o-o" or "t-w-o" from either. Old Mother Hubbard's cupboard was not barer of bones than is his mind of fundamental concepts. He informs you in perfect good faith that George Washington in 1492 ascended Vesuvius to see the Creator smoke. He is as incapable of distinguishing a restrictive from a non-restrictive clause as is a cow of jumping over the moon. To

him Dan is the most northerly, and Beersheba the most southerly, point in Scotland; Tennyson, he tells you, is a wonderful poet with long hair who wrote the idle king; and of Samuel Johnson he writes as follows: "In 1709 there was born in Lichfield, England, a most eccentric, gruff, and fat old man. He translated the Pope's *Messiah* from Latin into English and between 1759 and 1760 wrote a dictionary."

Everybody ascribes this state of affairs to the total depravity of the English teacher, but two classes of men are especially loud in denunciation—old business men and young college professors. Yet it is not the fault of the teachers. It is the fault of the system. It is due to the fact that they are now required at one and the same time to do two radically different things and to do about twice as much of each as flesh and blood can stand. To expect a teacher at one and the same time to train Johnnie to take in Shakespeare and to train him to express those ideas of his own which he should have but doesn't, is just as reasonable as it would be to expect her at one and the same time to travel north and south. The result is that we find the English teacher generally going south or up in the air.

If we separate literature and composition, teaching them in alternate semesters, this undesirable situation will be relieved in at least four important practical respects. First, if a teacher is given a composition class, he must teach composition. He cannot fill up his hours, to borrow an apt but rough phrase from Freeman, with silly talk about Shelley. He cannot mask his amiable indolence with a cloak of literary enthusiasm. He must fish or cut bait. Second, the pupil's deficiencies and virtues will be more easily discovered. For instance, Johnnie is strong in literature and weak in composition. If he gets 100 in literature and 50 in composition, he now passes with an average of 75. His weakness in composition is not discovered and, hence, not remedied. Third, if the subjects are separated, a boy who has failed in composition can be put at once into a class where nothing but composition is taught. He will not, as now, be compelled to repeat the literature in which he has passed in order to get the composition in which he has failed. Thus some waste of the boy's time and the taxpayers' money will be

eliminated. Fourth, and most important of all, the gain that springs from the unity of the object of a separated course means an important economy of time, and hence an important gain in efficiency. The work of a mixed class is like that of a mixed train. It is slow; it lacks momentum. Its speed is to that of a separated class as is the speed of a mixed train on a jerk-water railroad to that of the Twentieth Century Limited. A mixed class is like the cabin of an unthrifty outcast, which has one room that does duty as pigsty, kitchen, pantry, dining-room, parlor, bedroom, and attic; the segregated class is a room in a respectable house. Nice people, it is superfluous to add, do not keep the pig and the grand piano in the same room. We teach the importance of unity in sentence and paragraph structures; why not practice it also in the construction of our courses?

There is another consideration of some consequence. Jack London in his *John Barleycorn* says that, when he tried to teach himself to write, he first had to unlearn all that his high-school teachers and college professors had taught him, because the 1899 editors did not want poems modeled on *Snowbound* or essays based on *Sartor Resartus*. They wanted the 1899 truck. He learned how to produce it by studying and imitating the 1899 papers and magazines. At the time he was indignant at his teachers, but finally concluded that it was unfair to blame them, for, if they had known how to produce the 1899 truck, they would not have been impecunious pedagogues, but millionaire authors with yachts and ranches.

He was not, however, altogether unfair in blaming them. They ought to have studied the 1899 truck and still more ought we to study the 1914 truck. Insufferable as much of it is, there are reasons for its hold on the nation. For the most part it has at least the merit of a mirror. It reflects the tastes of the average person. Robert Louis Stevenson did not think it beneath his dignity to study the dime novel in order to learn the secret of its popularity. By appropriating its virtues and wedding them to a sane literary art, he produced *Dr. Jekyll* and *The Wreckers*. By an analogous process we can teach our pupils the secrets of the best modern literary practice, which is very good indeed, very much

better, in some respects, as a matter of fact, than that of fifty years ago. In this way, it seems to me, we may be able to train up a generation who will not tolerate the unspeakable rubbish that now fills too many of our current publications and we can furnish a supply of writers who can and will produce compositions that editors will buy, compositions that are worthy of a better name than "truck." Here, then, is a threefold opportunity, aim, and inspiration for the teacher of composition—an aim that is at once artistic, vocational, and ethical. It means ultimately a nation with sound literary standards. It means bread and butter for our most successful students. For all it means a better chance of escape from that spiritual bog from which mankind, ever since the days of the home "dryopithecus," has been struggling to emerge.

The chief reason back of these phenomena will be found in the fundamental nature of composition. Composition consists of two processes: gathering material and getting it across to the reader. The first bears about the same relative importance to the second as the size of a postcard to that of a postage stamp. Two stout legs are worth more to a reporter than a copious vocabulary. Now, while literature may and does assist one in learning how to get his ideas across to the reader, it can furnish him with those ideas no more than any one of a million other things. In other words, while composition touches literature at one point, it touches life at a million. For its manner we must go to literature; for its matter, to life. It is too big a thing to be made an appendage. It is too important to be left to chance. Let it have a place in the curriculum that is fixed, clear, certain, and separate. Then, and not till then, can it be taught successfully.

Even if these considerations were unsound, there remains another which is more fundamental still. Our teaching of literature is and must always be on a higher level than our teaching of composition. Many people can watch a football game who are quite incapable of performing satisfactorily in moleskins. "Sentimentally," said Charles Lamb, "I am inclined to harmony, but organically I am incapable of a tune." Most of us enjoy a production of *Hamlet*, but how many of us can write like Shakespeare? In mixing composition with literature as we do we are tacitly

assuming that in order to lead our pupils to read Shakespeare we must teach them how to write as he did. In other words we are combining in one course two processes which differ in complexity and difficulty as much as the act of looking at a picture differs from the act of painting one.

Such are the arguments in behalf of separation. As far as I can see, they are conclusive. And yet, in spite of all this, I am sure that the study of composition should not and cannot be dissociated from that of literature.

In spite of their English teachers, some people do learn to write well. This result may perhaps be ascribed, once or twice in a century, to that indescribable quality which we call genius; but it is obvious that some other hypothesis is needed to account for most of the passable writing that gets itself done. It seems reasonable to assume that if we could find out how successful writers train themselves we might, by applying their methods conscientiously and persistently to the instruction of our pupils, succeed in teaching those of ordinary ability to do passably well what people of extraordinary ability sometimes succeed in teaching themselves to do pre-eminently well, especially if there happens to be any one method which most successful writers appear to have used.

And there is such a method.

James Russell Lowell says in his essay on Chaucer that a poet learns to write just as a child learns to speak, by watching the lips of those who can speak better than he can. It was so with Chaucer. Ben Franklin tells us in his autobiography that he formed his own style by imitating the *Spectators* of Addison and Steele. Dr. Johnson says in a passage which is not, but ought to be, familiar to every schoolboy, "Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison." Lamb got his manner from Sir Thomas Browne. Stevenson relates in detail how he taught himself his trade by a multitude of monkey tricks based on a list of authors ranging from Lamb to Hazlitt and from Baudelaire to Obermann. Even Jack London confesses that he acquired his style by studying modern American magazines and newspapers nineteen hours a day.

Literature bristles with evidence that other and greater writers have done likewise. The *Aeneid* is an imitation, a very palpable imitation, of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Dante openly proclaims that Virgil was his master. In *Paradise Lost*, by substituting Satan for Aeneas, Eve for Dido, and hell for Africa, John Milton produced a parody more impressive than his model, but still a parody. Tennyson confesses that his epic, his *King Arthur*, consists of faint Homeric echoes. It seems clear that Aeschylus learned from Pindar, Sophocles from Aeschylus, Euripides from Sophocles, Racine, Corneille, and Milton from all three.

"Shakespeare himself, the imperial," says Stevenson, "proceeds directly from a school." By judiciously imitating sporting Kyd on the one hand and on the other studying the cadences of Marlowe's mighty lines, he learned to steer from grave to gay, from lively to severe, in a fashion which overjoyed all his contemporaries except Greene, who expressed his grief by calling the predatory William "an upstart crow beautified with our feathers." It was true. It is also true that *Wilhelm Tell* and *Beket* remind one in countless ways of *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. Theocritus taught Milton the plan of *Lycidas*, Virgil the art of writing Bucolics, and Tennyson the melodies of *Oenone*. The influence of Demosthenes is clear enough in the *Areopagitica*; and the ground plan of Burke's *Conciliation* is essentially the same as that of Cicero's *Manilian Law*. "The more I wonder the less I can imagine," wrote Francis Jeffrey to Thomas B. Macaulay, "where you picked up that style." If he had investigated a little more and wondered a little less, he would have found the answer in Demosthenes and Cicero, in Thucydides and Tacitus, in Homer and Dante, in the King James Bible, in Milton, Addison, and Burke. Macaulay's sentence structure has been aped with some success by John Richard Green, John Churton Collins, John Bach McMaster, James B. Angell, and Sir George Otto Trevelyan, not to mention several hundreds of less skilful disciples, while the essential orderliness of his frameworks and clearness of his paragraph structures have influenced many other imitators, including Francis Parkman and John Fiske. Even Thomas Carlyle confesses that he got his style by imitating his father's speech. Did Irving learn nothing from Addison, Bryant from Wordsworth, Lowell from

Tennyson, Whittier from Burns, or Holmes from Pope? Think of Burns's obligations to Spenser, Pope, and Ferguson. Indeed, the only poets I am accustomed to think of as not being imitators are Homer and Rudyard Kipling. But has not the latter imitated Will Carleton and Bret Harte? And does he not somewhere sing of the former:

“When 'Omer smote 'is bloomin' lyre,
'E'd 'eard men sing by land and sea;
And wot 'e thought 'e might require
'E went and took, the same as me.”

It would be easy to expand this catalogue, but it is needless. The conclusion is irresistible. The way to learn to write is to use models.

But, it will be objected, while this is all very well in theory, in practice it will not work. These men were geniuses. They assimilated their models. The models will assimilate the average student.

My answer to this is that they do not assimilate the average student, provided they are wisely graded to fit his capacity. I grant that he cannot imitate as wholes *Macbeth*, Carlyle's *Burns*, *Ivanhoe*, *Silas Marner*, or most of the other classics that are in our reading-lists. To ask him to try to do this would be futile. But he can imitate fragments even of these, and there is a whole world of material outside of these which may be the basis for exercises that are at once profitable and delightful. And herein lies perhaps the strongest of all arguments for the separation which I have advocated. I mean that without separation it is impossible to get at the material which ought to be used for this purpose.

As a matter of fact, we have all been using models, more or less consciously, all our lives. Every rhetoric and composition book ever written is full of them. Indeed some of these books contain little of value except models.

There is another reason for the use of models which was strongly urged by Stevenson. They furnish a student with an ideal. Before he begins to write it is certain that he will not attain that ideal. He cannot equal his model. He is certain of failure. “But,” says Stevenson, “failure is the only high road to success.”

It will also be objected that the use of models is not the way to be original. Here again Stevenson's remark is final. He says, "This is not the way to be original, nor is there any way to be original but to be born so. Nor at the same time if you are original is there anything in this process to clip the wings of your originality."

In view of these accumulated considerations, reinforced by some years' experimentation, I think that it is a good plan to divide the high-school course into eight units, each representing the work of one half-year. Until the universal establishment of junior high schools has rendered it unnecessary, one of these must probably be devoted to technical English grammar. In three or four there should be extensive reading of classics ranging in length from ten to one thousand pages, the sole object being to lead the pupil to absorb and hence enjoy, in the broadest and best sense of these terms, the content of the literature thus read. As a means to this end much speaking and some writing should be done. In the remaining four or three courses the sole object should be to help the pupil to learn to express himself orally and on paper. As a means to this end there should be intensive study of imitable masterpieces ranging in length from one hundred to one thousand words, the purpose being to lead the student inductively to develop the principles of effective writing and then to use those principles in the actual work of composition. In other words, I would separate literature from composition, but, in teaching composition, I would found my process on a much closer and more scientific union of composition and literature than is possible when the two are taught together.

I have heard one or two objections to such a separation of composition and literature. First, it is said that a whole semester of composition is too monotonous. I do not see that, even when taught unscientifically, it is more monotonous than a whole semester of chemistry, algebra, history, or bookkeeping. Taught scientifically, its range is at least as wide as that of literature. Boswell probably did not suffer from ennui on account of the twenty years' work he devoted to his *Life of Johnson*, or Peary from the twenty-five years during which he was engaged in gathering materials for *Farthest North*, or Grant from the lifetime that

went to the making of his *Memoirs*. Composition, indeed, to those who understand its true nature, is as entertaining as life, and as varied, for it is not only as broad as life but it is life.

"But," it is said, "if we teach Latin composition in the same class with Latin literature, why is it not logical to teach English composition in the same class with English literature?" In case I were disposed to jest, I should reply that, logically or illogically, we now teach neither Latin composition nor literature; the serious reply to this contention, however, is that our Latin work in the high school is on a different plane from our English work. Its problem is the acquisition of the elements of the language, not its effective use as a tool. You will find that the practice of university instructors in Latin, who deal with students after they emerge from the primary stage of the study, is to present Latin composition and Latin literature in separate courses. As a matter of fact, the stupidest American ninth-grader can speak English more fluently and effectively than the most brilliant American college Senior can speak Latin. If he could not, he would starve or be put in a home for the feeble-minded.

With somewhat more reason I have heard it urged that, if a pupil drops composition for a whole term, when he comes to resume the study and practice of composition six months later it will be found that he has forgotten what he had previously learned. The answer to this is that it is impossible for anybody to forget what he has once learned or what he has never learned. Separation simply enables us to discover that he is ignorant, which is the first step, I believe, toward knowledge. Without separation we often fail to take even this first necessary step. Besides, what is going to happen in this connection after he leaves school?

The objection which has been raised most frequently and which has been most persistently reiterated, however, is that the separation of composition and literature would make it necessary for one teacher to teach nothing but composition, while another teacher taught nothing but literature. "Why," it is said, "should we condemn one teacher to the soul-destroying drudgery of teaching composition while we permit another to wander at will among the flowery meads of literature?" The very fact that this question

can be asked appears to me to be one of the strongest arguments that could be brought forward in favor of separation. If anybody thinks that the job of teaching composition is drudgery while the job of teaching literature is unalloyed joy, he is probably qualified to teach neither. At all events, he has never tried to teach composition according to the system by which all the great masters of style have instructed themselves. If you do not believe this, get one of your classes to write a description of North America based on the first paragraph of Caesar's *Gallic War*. As a matter of fact, there is no necessity, if you wish to separate composition-teaching from literature-teaching, for insisting that one teacher must teach nothing but composition and another nothing but literature. It is perfectly feasible to give one and the same teacher two classes in composition and three in literature this term and three in composition and two in literature next term. The result, if this is done, is that each teacher has only from fifty to seventy-five pupils in composition at any one time. This is an easy and entirely practicable way of securing a solution of the problem of the overworked composition teacher, which Professor Hopkins has so long striven to bring about, and which everybody else up to the present time has considered altogether desirable but perfectly hopeless. And, while it will be secured without the expenditure of one additional dollar of the people's money, it will bring about a large addition to the efficiency of the schools.

I cannot forbear concluding this paper with two compositions written upon the plan which I have been describing. The first is the result of a study of Kingsley's "Three Fishers":

THE "TITANIC"

It was in the morning hours. The largest ship in the world left the pier amid cheers and shouts of admiration from the crowd assembled to watch it off. Leaning over the rail of the mammoth vessel, and waving their farewells, were men and women of the highest and lowest stations in life. With no thought or feeling of danger they enjoyed to the utmost the distinction of being passengers on the "Titanic" during her maiden voyage.

The night was black and cold. The "Titanic" lay in midocean, helpless, sinking, with a ragged hole in her hull. A huge indistinct mass just ahead had stayed her career. On deck there were praying, cursing, screaming, and shouts

of "We've struck an iceberg," "God save us," "She's all right," "We're sinking," "Lower the boats," while the band played their last piece, "Nearer My God, to Thee." The crew were loading the women and children into boats, assisted by men passengers whose life in a few moments would be extinct. There were affectionate farewells. Wives clung to their husbands, mothers to their sons, in a last earthly embrace. The sacred music rung in their ears, and there were faces upturned to heaven. Gone were riches, power, and fame in the presence of Death.

It was early dawn. The waves rolled over the deep resting-place of the "Titanic." Scattered upon the rolling sea were lifeboats containing the suffering survivors and pieces of floating wreckage. Over on the horizon the "Carpathia" had just hove into sight. There were outcries of "Thank God, thank God!" The iceberg loomed hazy in the distance.

The other is an imitation of Sir William Jones's "Ode in Imitation of Alcaeus":

WHAT CONSTITUTES A SCHOOL?

(With apologies to Sir William Jones and Henry van Dyke)

What constitutes a school?
 Not gilded architrave or pillared hall,
 Carved stone, or marble pool,
 Not storied glass whence rich reflections fall,
 Not picture, map, or book,
 Not old elm-shaded walk or playground wide,
 Not shop or studious nook,
 Whereto the fond alumnus points with pride.
 No! Boys, high-minded boys,
 Full of high hope and aspiration high,
 Who daily know the joys
 Of treading earth and gazing on the sky;
 And those delicious sprites,
 Composed of innocence and guile and curls,
 Whom he who speaks or writes
 Must, lacking adequate words, denominate girls,
 Each a magician,
 Filling the world with wonder and with joy,
 Making each boy a man
 And every man regret he's not a boy;
 And teachers, too, who prize
 The daily opportunity to do their work,
 But, prizing, still despise
 With calm disdain the hypocrite and shirk.

Knowing no other rule
Than that just pride which guards its own fair name,
These constitute a school,
Upbuild its honor, and advance its fame.
These, when they leave its walls,
Sustain the lowly, calmly meet the great,
And, if stern Duty calls,
Fill with large deeds the annals of the state.

This ode reminds me of one important by-product of the method which I have recommended. It renders plagiarism not only impossible but unattractive, for who cares to steal when he owns the earth and everything that's in it? This is a matter of importance, for, unless we English teachers are unusually wary, we are likely to think we are getting what we are not. I well remember one of my own earlier experiments, which at least had the merit of teaching me a wholesome lesson. One of the exercises in a certain school, which had a great reputation for its work in English, used to be the production by each student in the fourth year of an original sonnet. At the end of the year these were gathered into a neat little book, which was printed and distributed for the admiration of the friends and relatives of the authors. Being ambitious, I said to myself, "I will go and do likewise"; so I required each of my pupils to write an original sonnet. When they were handed to me I discovered that they could be classified in three groups. The first consisted of productions that were indescribably bad. They were without form and void; i.e., they were written in defiance of the plainest rules of prosody, grammar, and common-sense. The second group consisted of some of the noblest sonnets in the English language. The boys and girls had stolen them *verbatim et literatim*, though not usually *punctuatim*, from Wordsworth, Milton, Sidney, and Shakespeare. In the third group there was only one sonnet. This had appeared anonymously some years before in an obscure magazine, and the guilty author, as Frenchmen, janitors, and Professor Lounsbury say, was "me." I put all of the rubbish into the wastebasket, marked the boy who had given this signal proof of poetic taste 100, and from that day to this have done my best to lead an honest life.

DISCUSSION

ELLEN F. P. PEAKE

State Normal School, Oshkosh, Wisconsin

In the topic under discussion this morning, it is unfortunate that the term "separation" admits of more than one interpretation.

The separation of literature and composition does not mean that literary models are to be ostracized in composition classes, but that the two subjects should not be combined in one and the same course; that is, they should not be considered two phases of one subject complementary to each other, and so interdependent that they could be taught together with distinct advantage to each.

The functions and natures of the two subjects are entirely different. The chief function of composition is the communication of ideas; that of literature, the widening of the mental horizon, the broadening and deepening of the emotional nature, and the stimulation to noble action, thereby strengthening the fiber of the will. Composition, by training to effective use of language, puts one in touch with the social and business world; literature makes the individual himself more worth while. Composition is outer and has a more or less clearly defined utilitarian value; literature, being inner, is more subtle in its influence, and though of greater ultimate value than perhaps any subject in the curriculum, is not so easily estimated as a utilitarian asset.

Since the functions and the natures of the two subjects are so different, the advantages of teaching them together would seem to be more apparent than real.

There is but little more reason why they should be combined in one course than any other two subjects as loosely related; as, for instance, geography and history, French and Latin, drawing and writing. And, except for the element of historical habit, there is but little more reason why composition should be combined with literature than with any other subject.

Some of the reasons why literature and composition should not be taught together are as follows:

1. The teacher, though credited with one subject, carries the burden of two, one of which—composition—instead of being counted as a half-subject, as it is when the courses are combined, should by itself be considered a two-period or double subject because of the immense amount of outside work demanded, requiring an expenditure of time quite equal to that of the science laboratory period. When this double-period subject is combined with another subject—literature—it is obvious that the burden for the teacher is trebled.

2. When the two subjects are considered as one course, even in those schools where a definite assignment of hours is allotted to each of them, both

must lose by the combination unless the period assigned to the combined courses be twice as great as that assigned to each single course in the curriculum.

3. In schools where the allotment of time is left to the teacher, the conditions for composition when combined with literature frequently become extreme. Experience has shown that so much more time is given to literature that cumulative work in composition is impossible, and, as Mr. Miller has shown, the student is passed, not on his ability to write and to speak correctly, but on what he has been able to accomplish in literature. Instances are only too common of students inexpressibly weak in spelling and in composition who pass out of English classes upon the averages made in literature.

4. In schools where the courses are separated it is much less possible for a student to graduate until he has given evidence of some ability to express himself correctly in both speaking and writing.

This requirement has been found very effective in arousing the student from his attitude of tolerant unconcern, and, by giving him a vital personal interest in the matter, has shifted the burden of responsibility to the shoulders of the individual most affected by the outcome.

5. Akin to this is the tendency of the student, when the courses are combined, to think of idiomatic English as a peculiarity or fetic of literature teachers—as something remote from everyday life, and of no great value except in literature classes. In some localities students seem almost ashamed to be caught using correct pronunciation and idiomatic English outside of English classes.

And this association of good English with English classes only is not peculiar to the student. Even members of the faculty expect the teacher of literature to hold the student to a much higher ideal in oral and written English than they themselves do in their own classes. With the separation of the courses, composition, no longer allied with a so-called cultural subject, would assume a more practical aspect. What is more, the composition teacher, relieved of a double responsibility, would have both time and spirit to institute a faculty-wide crusade against the slovenly English tolerated in other classes, and he might even awaken an incipient English conscience in the faculty members themselves in regard to their own speech. Thus the composition class would become the clearing-house of English for the whole school.

6. In addition to the loss of time from program allotment, to which reference has already been made, the combination of the courses entails another loss in the economy of either time or material for both subjects. When the elements of composition have been mastered and the language sense begins to awaken, the student will derive much help in acquiring an effective style from the scrutiny of the methods employed by the best writers. Since the functions and the natures of the two subjects—literature and composition—are so different, the material best for the one may not be the best for the other. For instance, Burns, Browning, and the present-day exponents of provincial types in America, though excellent for literature, lack practical values in composition for all but the exceptional student. With the separation of the courses, the

teacher of each could select the material best suited to his needs, and, as Mr. Miller has said, the student would learn to write modern English from models best adapted to his development and requirements.

Then, too, nothing is more disastrous to a passion for literature than the dissection of a masterpiece. Love for literature should be love at first sight, deepened by study into a sound and abiding affection, not the cool, impersonal regard of scientific appreciation. If sacrilegious hands are to be laid upon a masterpiece, it had better be done in the composition class, where it pedagogically belongs, than in the literature class, the chief function of which is a higher appreciation of life.

7. It has been questioned whether, if the courses were separated, there might not be difficulty in securing efficient teachers of composition. I fancy not. I believe the outlook would be worse for literature but better for composition. Almost everybody thinks he can teach literature. The nature of literature being subtle, the teacher may not realize how little he has accomplished. In composition the results are evident. Were the courses separated, every teacher of composition would have to be equal to his position, as he could no longer hide behind the intangibilities of literature. If he lacked power or equipment he would soon find it out. As a consequence, every teacher of composition would be forced to become an expert. Should the supply run short, salaries would rise, and that in itself would attract strong teachers to the course. What is more important, the English teacher, relieved of the double burden, would take a new interest in the work, and, to quote Arnold of Rugby, the student "would drink, not from the stagnant pool, but from the sparkling rills of ever fresh inspiration."

8. In regard to the division of time for English work in the high school I am inclined to differ with Mr. Miller. Instead of giving one unit to grammar, three or four, preferably three, to literature, and three or four, preferably four, to composition based on literary models, I should suggest giving one unit to grammar, one unit to *reading*, three to literature, and three to composition. In the composition classes I am inclined to believe that not more than two units of time should be given to work based on the intensive study of literary models.

Social and industrial conditions vary greatly in different sections of the country. Social environment should be a factor in determining the requirements of the curriculum.

In towns and cities which have not central grammar schools, a great diversity in English preparation is noticeable in the students entering the high schools. For these one semester's work may be profitably used in revealing the student to himself and in drilling him in those elements of composition which he is supposed to have mastered, but in which he finds himself deficient.

At this stage of his development the use of literary models, especially those drawn from newspapers and magazines, will be found valuable, not for intensive study, but to give a practical, present-day emphasis to the technicalities of the written page.